

Forest practices on freehold land

IMPORTANT

New arrangements protecting regrowth vegetation will take effect from 8 October 2009. These arrangements replace the regrowth moratorium which ended on 7 October 2009. More information about the new arrangements is available on the department's website on <www.derm.qld.gov.au>.

Queensland's vegetation management framework regulates the clearing of native vegetation. It protects the state's biodiversity and, by conserving native vegetation, addresses land degradation problems such as salinity, soil degradation, erosion and declining water quality.

Under the framework, the Queensland Government ended broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in December 2006. However, vegetation clearing is still allowed for certain purposes.

Where can a forest practice be carried out?

Forest practice can be carried out on freehold land in both remnant vegetation and regulated regrowth vegetation in accordance with the code. Regulated regrowth vegetation was introduced on 8 October 2009 as part of the new arrangements that replace the Moratorium Act.

Areas of regulated regrowth vegetation can be viewed by downloading the regrowth vegetation map for free at the departmental website.

Areas of remnant vegetation are shown on the regional ecosystem map and can also be downloaded for free at the departmental website.

What is a forest practice?

A forest practice is when a tree is planted, managed, felled or removed on freehold land or Indigenous land for an on-going forestry business in a native forest, and the activities have been conducted in a way that is consistent with a code applying to a native forest practice.

An on-going forestry business is a business that provides recurring income from harvesting trees over a long period (measured in years or decades).

A native forest means naturally occurring native vegetation.

A forest practice includes drainage, road and track construction and maintenance, and other necessary engineering work.

Forest practices do not include clearing vegetation for the initial development of a plantation.

Some common examples of forest practices include:

- harvesting trees to produce sawlogs or poles for sale

- harvesting fence posts and rails for sale
- thinning a limited number of non-commercial trees to favour retained trees with better commercial potential.

Forest practices in private native forests do not require approval under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA), provided they meet the rules set out in the code applying to a native forest practice on freehold land (the code).

Code requirements

The code applies to forest practices (including silviculture and harvesting) in remnant and regulated regrowth vegetation on freehold land and Indigenous land.

The code contains required practices that must be met to lawfully conduct a forest practice.

The code includes requirements for:

- demonstrating that the forest practice is for an ongoing forestry business
- harvesting and silvicultural operations
- maintaining wildlife habitat
- protecting streams, drainage lines and adjacent vegetation from the impacts of forest practice
- protecting wetlands, lakes and springs from the impacts of forest practice
- protecting the soil resource from degradation due to forest practice
- managing the forest practice to ensure no adverse impacts from acid sulphate soils occur.

It is the responsibility of landholders who are undertaking native forest practices to make sure that they comply with the code.

Forest practice activities that do not meet code requirements may be subject to investigation.

Notifying DERM of a forest practice

Landholders wishing to conduct a native forest practice in native forest on freehold land are required to notify DERM, on the approved form, before operations commence. There is no fee to notify.

The form is available from the DERM website <www.derm.qld.gov.au> and should be completed and sent to DERM.

Field guide

A field guide has been developed to help forest practice operators. This is available from the DERM website.

The guide:

- Provides an explanation, in operational order, of the Code requirements together with necessary definitions and interpretations
- Explains the procedures for notification of a native forest practice
- Includes comments, suggestions and recommended practices

Further information

For further information about forest practices on freehold land, please visit the website www.derm.qld.gov.au or contact DERM on 13 13 14.

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For general enquiries contact the
Queensland Government call centre 13 13 04
or visit www.derm.qld.gov.au